

Language, Culture and Mind

Lecturer: Eva Filippova, PhD

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Course Description:

The course provides an interdisciplinary insight into current findings across the diverse research areas covering language, culture, and mind to explain individuals' behaviour in a larger cultural and psychological context. The course content stretches across a range of psycholinguistic, anthropological, ethnographic, and social-cognitive topics dealing with social behaviour, allowing students to naturally compare the manifestations of these across at least their primary socialization milieu and the study-abroad context. As such, the course provides a unique experience for cultural enrichment along with the understanding of the social-psychological underpinnings of the contemporary Czech culture, yet assuming a distinctive view on their prior conceptualizations of their own thinking, communicating, and interacting.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

Upon the completion of the course, students

- will demonstrate a more objective understanding of the basis of human action and interaction,
- will have uncovered the intricacies of cultural and linguistic representation tied to human nature,
- will have fostered their critical thinking and identified psychological challenges that arise from cultural and linguistic variability,
- will demonstrate their ability to form new perspectives through informal environment facilitating sharing of views and ideas,
- will have developed reading-comprehension skills adequate for scholarly literature and an ability to engage in an academic dialogue,
- will have enhanced their cultural understanding and adaptability to new cultural situations,
- and will foster their cultural self-awareness, other culture awareness and the dynamics between them.

Course Requirements:

1. Reflections for a portfolio

A total of four reflection entries will be required from each student, each 500-words long. The papers should reflect on the course topics, readings, discussions, etc. pertaining to the content of the class and should examine a theme beyond the reading and/or class discussion. The choice of the readings or themes is up to each student, although the instructor is ready to consult the topics with students. Intellectual queries are welcome but a reflection based on one's own application of the knowledge gained on to one's personal experience will suffice.

2. Individual Class Presentation

Each student is required to present and lead a discussion on one of the course themes of their own choice relating to the topic of the course and the students' interests. Upon an agreement with the instructor, the student will present their topic to the class for about 20-minute long. It will be followed by a discussion lead by the presenting student.

3. Peer Reviews

Students are required to review five different presentations of their choice and write a constructive criticism to help their peer to reflect on the delivery and the content of their presentation. To get a full score, the review should include both the positive aspects of the presentation, as well as suggest avenues for improvement of concrete facets of the presentation.

4. Final academic paper

The final course work consists of writing a research paper in which an analysis of the constituent parts and their subsequent synthesis will be assessed. One of three topics suggested by the instructor will be graded as to whether the thesis of the paper is well defended and counterarguments are dealt with equally (Grade A), whether the thesis is supported sufficiently (Grade B), whether the thesis is clearly constructed without sufficient arguments presented for either the arguments or counter-arguments to the thesis (Grade C), or whether the paper only marginally touches on the theme of the course and at least some part of an argument is present (Grade D). A total of 2000-2500 words with an adequate list of scholarly references will be required.

5. Class participation

Class participation will consider the students' familiarity with the course readings and the willingness to either spur or join a class debate on a particular class topic. Online discussions will allow for a further engagement in virtual space to elaborate on the topics raised in class.

Assessment and Final Grade:

1. Four reflections for a class portfolio, 4x5%	20%
2. Individual class presentation	20%
3. Peer reviews of 5 presentations, 5x2%	10%
4. Final Academic paper	30%
5. Class participation	20%

Mandatory Completion Policy

Note that all mandatory assignments and exams must be completed to the best of your ability in order for your final grade to be issued. Failure to complete a mandatory assignment or exam may result in a failing grade.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description
A+	97-100	Excellent Work
A	93-97	Outstanding Work
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	Good work
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable Work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course

UPCES Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not tolerated. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the development of knowledge and learning is encouraged at many stages of the learning process. While we value technology for educational purposes, we also value originality and the retention of knowledge, and thus using AI for assignments and examinations, even if rephrased, is strictly prohibited and considered an academic integrity violation, unless the instructor explicitly allows for it in the context of evaluated work

UPCES Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy

The UPCES program in Prague promotes a diverse learning environment where the dignity, worth, and differences of each individual are valued and respected. Discrimination and harassment, whether based on a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected characteristic, are repugnant and completely inconsistent with our objectives. Retaliation against individuals for raising good faith claims of harassment and/or discrimination is prohibited.

UPCES Diversity Policy

UPCES fully embraces diversity and strives to create a safe and welcoming environment for students from all backgrounds. Prague is a wonderfully diverse community and UPCES is no different. All students should feel at home while studying abroad and UPCES will do its utmost to make sure that becomes a reality. Although unique challenges may arise, we believe that students from all walks of life will encounter wonderful opportunities for enrichment as they explore a new culture while studying abroad.

Weekly Schedule:

Week 1

Orientation Week

UPCES Orientation and Lecture Series

Week 2

Course introduction

Course content, course requirements, grading and syllabus overview
Key concepts defined

Readings due:

Course syllabus

Journal databases through students' home university library access

Week 3

Language and socialization

Language and its acquisition within a culture, socialization of behavior and thought

Readings due:

Fabbro, Fabbro & Crescentini 2022

Week 4

Storytelling and cultural narrative

The role of externalizing cultural habits and values and justify the social behavior and interaction

Readings due :

Newman et al. 2023

Shen & Jiang 2023

Deliverables: Journal entry 1 due

Week 5

Bilingualism and multilingualism

Multi-layered acquisition of linguistic and psychological concept and their representations

Readings due:

Labotka et al. 2023

Week 6

Is there a cultural psyche?

What does a psyche entail and is there one bound to one's culture?

Possible guest lecture, TBC

Readings due:

Charura & Bushell 2023

Deliverables: Journal entry 2 due

Week 7

Social thinking and representation

What constitutes a mind and how constrained thinking is because of language & culture?

Readings due:

Vandelanotte 2023

Rose 2016

Week 8

Beliefs and Emotions

Mental states across contexts, universalism vs. relativism

Readings due:

Abu-Raiya, Pargament & Krause 2016

Miller et al. 2017

Deliverables: Journal entry 3 due

Week 9

Direct and indirect communication

The cultural diversity in coding through subtle and less subtle cues

Readings due:

Filippova 2014a

Filippova 2014b

Week 10

Intercultural relations and communication

How to foster and train communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries?

Readings due:

Genkova et al. 2022
Khukhlaev et al. 2022

Deliverables: Journal entry 4 due

Week 11

Health and wellbeing

The concept of wellbeing and psychopathology through the lens of culture

Readings due: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/client-centred-therapy.html>

Winkler et al. 2015, 801–806

Week 12

Context revisited

The role of ethnography and anthropology in the contemporary conceptualization of mind

Readings due:

Berry 2022

Chen 2022

Deliverables: Peer reviews due

Week 13

Phylogenetic considerations

Universal aspects of human behavior and communication from an evolutionary perspective

Readings due:

Currie 2013

Chasiotis 2011

Deliverables: Final research paper due

Readings:

Abu-Raiya, H., Pargament, K. I., & Krause, N. (2016). Religion as problem, religion as solution: Religious buffers of the links between religious/spiritual struggles and well-being/mental health. *Quality Of Life Research. International Journal of Quality of Life Aspects of Treatment, Care & Rehabilitation*, 25(5), 1265-1274.

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Professor's profile:

Eva Filippova, PhD	
Nationality	Slovak & Canadian
Academic degrees	Hons. B.A., M.A., PhD (University of Toronto)
Research interests	Human development, social cognition, language, non-literal communication, irony, atypical development